AB 75 Principal Training Advisory Group Meeting December 10, 2001

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Purpose and desired outcome of meeting

Chairperson Dave Gordon began by stating that the Advisory Group will not be covering content areas 2 through 4 (as described in the legislation) today. Development of criteria in these areas is contracted to Sacramento State Office of Education (SCOE), and they are not yet finished for group review. Instead these criteria will be discussed at the next meeting [set for December 20, at 10 am].

Dave Gordon introduced Dr. Alice Furry of SCOE who is developing criteria for AB 75 in areas 2 through 4, and also developing training provider criteria for AB 466 (teacher professional development). She spoke about finding a way of integrating AB 466 and AB 75 so there is a strong interface for principals that focuses on the three content areas. She said that both sets of criteria need to accommodate differences between the school levels of elementary, middle and high schools.

Public comment

Dave Gordon invited the following speakers to address the Advisory Group.

Speaker: Ruben Ingram, Director of Training for the School Employers Association of California.

The speaker stated that he agrees on the need for a total program approach, but noted that "some of us have expertise in [only] some areas and want to be part" of the training. He said that his group has trained 400 principals in the last year or so in the area of legal issues. They also offer training for peer assistance and review, joint counsels, and areas related to personnel. He wants a way for his group to offer a part of the training. He stated that the specialties of his group are especially important for new administrators.

Speaker: David Patterson, Director, Governmental Relations, California Network of Educational Charters.

The speaker noted that there is no mention of charter schools anywhere in the draft criteria. He stated that networks of charter schools – not just districts - should be mentioned in the guidelines as an organizational unit. He stated that there should be a requirement for providers to give an overview, and that the guidelines need a context. His concern is that we might get providers who address the nuts and bolts but don't have a real understanding of the whole picture. He mentioned Davis Conway's work on the dimensions of restructuring. He also noted that there should be time spent on the business or fiscal functions needs of principals. This work is not just to analyze test data. There is a need for recognition of the whole picture. He also stated that the guidelines should not be so prescriptive.

At this point Advisory Group member Linda Bond expressed the need to set up a mechanism to see if some principals can test out of some areas of the training.

Speaker: Ann Emanuels, principal, San Juan Unified School District. The speaker expressed the concern that the third part of the goal for AB 75 is to develop in principals who can lead schools through powerful instructional change, but that this important component is relegated to the 6B content area, which is primarily in the follow-up portion of the training. She stated that the ability to lead through change must be directly taught and is crucial to leading a school. She asks the Advisory Group to reconsider or move it to the direct instructional part of the program. She believes that it is not sufficiently addressed in the administrator preparation Tier 1 credential program.

Speaker: Marianne Pack, California Technology Assistance Project The speaker stated that we should be sure that CTAP is used where it is in place, as well as Statewide Technology Services. This program should leverage already funded projects, including the Digital California Program.

Review of Draft Criteria, Focusing on Key Decisions

Dave Gordon posed several questions to the group, in the areas of

- 1. Differentiation of training
- 2. Suggested allotment of time
- 3. Technology component.
- 4. Optional content

Gordon proposed that these topics be the focus of the discussion for the rest of the meeting.

Advisory Group member Paul Disario suggested first discussing the issue of leadership training, which "should be the first criterion for any principal training." He stated that principals need to have a clear vision, focus on 1-2 clear goals, make leadership the goal for the first 2 years, follow through on commitments, learn techniques for supporting common goals, and learn basic skills such as holding meetings and getting up in front of groups.

In response, Assistant Secretary of Education Teresa Garcia noted that the AB 75 training is not the only training or instruction that principals ever receive. "We could not accomplish the Tier 1 administrator curriculum in 160 hours of training." Advisory Group member Genaro Carapia stressed the importance of focusing on instructional goals, saying, "My district will look at my API score and expect results." He added that there should be no redundancy in the training that principals receive. Advisory Group member Angela Addiego added that leadership training is covered in Tier 1 and that the vendor could individualize the training for new principals.

Paul Disario reemphasized the importance of principals needing to get everyone behind the school wide goal. Advisory Group member Rowland Baker suggested that leadership and vision should be embedded in the guidelines, as it is somewhat missing in the draft. All standards should start with leadership and vision.

Advisory Group member Joni Samples discussed principals in small districts, saying that many have been in their positions for many years and are unable to leave their school to get trained on the new pieces of their jobs. Advisory Group member Betsy Eaves reminded the group that this is intended to be purposeful work. She stated that we need to focus the criteria on actions that will result in new leadership as noted in the Richard Elmore article. She emphasized the importance of technical action and well-grounded content. She stated that we must be able to get people to focus on the work, and to be purposeful and focused on results and the accountability model.

Linda Bond stated that this issue was debated by those who wrote the legislation and reminded the group that we must operate within the scope of the bill. Advisory Group member Marjorie Thompson stated that site administrators still have the administrative role but need to concentrate now on instructional leadership.

1. Differentiation of training

Teresa Garcia responded that this is why there needs to be differentiation in the principal training. She stated that the work must be based on context but that we want to ensure that there is a reliable way for providers to "test" principals to allow them to opt out of some portions of the training. Providers should demonstrate whether they have a mechanism for proper placement. If principals know something, they should not opt out of training altogether, but should spend their training time at a higher skill set in the same content area. Dave Gordon stated that we need a 'validation method' to test out of certain program components. Advisory Group member Jay Schenirer stated that we should look at results for this initiative rather than seat time. There should be a list of competencies and if it is demonstrated that the principal has those competencies they can opt out. He pointed out that some administrators may have technical skills but can't move the school to change. He emphasized that accountability is the key. He stated that the 80 hours of instruction and the 80 hours of follow-up is prescribed, but that flexibility should exist at the district level, so that district leaders can specify what they need. There needs to be a set of minimum skills that principals need to accomplish.

Advisory Group member Richard Navarro stated that we need to tie the guidelines back to existing standards for administrators [CPSELS]. We need to take into account both experience and context. Rather than principals being allowed to test out, we should have an assessment to develop a principal profile and the provider can then develop training programs to meet different levels of needs. Testing into a more relevant training program is more related to needs and can be tied to content standards. Dave Gordon stated that the provider will need to prepare tiers of training, so that principals won't test out of the whole training, but will test out of select levels.

Betsy Eaves stated that there are not many principals in low-performing schools who understand how to use standards and assessment to improve student achievement. She stressed that it is very important that "testing out" not be based on an individual's opinion of their technical skill. She stated that a discussion of differentiated instruction must be connected to student achievement outcomes. She said that she is hesitant to have

differentiation of instruction. We can expect flexibility, she said but not allow principals to opt out because they've taken particular course already. She added that all principals are needful of this kind of training. They need an extremely sophisticated process and very sophisticated training as soon as possible. Jay Schenirer noted that there might be principals who have extensive technology skills and that this may be an area where classes can be differentiated.

At this point chairperson Dave Gordon asked the staff to draft something reflecting the discussion on differentiation.

Bill Vasey, Department of Education, noted that the staff will need to translate the draft criteria into practical language that can be used to actually approve providers.

2. Suggested allotment of time

Dave Gordon asked the group if it wanted to give any guidelines about time allotment in the various content areas. Angela Addiego referred to Richard Elmore's article. She stated that there should not be a specific allotment of time but rather that flexibility should be maintained. She suggested the use of a rubric tool to determine how widely or deeply the programs go. She also suggested setting up competencies. She stated that we're forgetting that coaching is an area for differentiation. Jay Schenirer commented that if we don't tie up too much time we can get a good program. Joni Samples said that if programs are providing tiering, there should be some flexibility. Areas 2,3, and 4 may take up 60% of time. Need some focus in some areas, and flexibility and tiering across the board.

Dave Gordon asked if there should be some minimum level of concentration in each area. Teresa Garcia explained that the developers of the legislation wanted to ensure that the named areas were covered in depth. However, some districts have already done training in these areas so we don't want to tie a district to something they don't need. We don't necessarily need a "test," but we want to understand where districts are in regards to the standards. We don't want a time allotment that's hard and fast, rather we want to develop competencies. Linda Bond said that we will want to know "How districts will show 'what happened here?' 'What happened as a result of this program?'" If the level of sophistication is high, she asked, how do we know what is gained? Do we need to assess the level of competency going in and coming out? Dave Gordon reiterated that the guidelines should not be so rigid that principals have to go over things they already know.

Richard Navarro suggested asking the vendors to provide the benchmarks they expect to achieve and how they will assess their progress through the process. What is the minimum level of skill and what is considered mastery? Joni Samples said we want providers to know what the baseline is, and to show the progress from the baseline assessment to the end of the course. Jay Schenirer suggested that there should be an assessment of competency at various levels. Statewide there should be some criteria based on these areas. Dave Gordon suggested that maybe this is something that could evolve, but that we're not there yet. He stated that this is something that hopefully can spin out of the programs eventually, but we need district and providers to work together.

Linda Bond suggested that models of assessments could be developed. Paul Disario asked if this is something that should be done at the district level.

Teresa Garcia stated that depth and breadth will vary in programs. We want to be sure it is flexible, she said, but also make sure that the areas are covered. We need a set of baseline criteria that everyone operates under. Principals need to know certain things about standards, instructional materials, etc. Genaro Carapia stated that it needs to be decided between the local district and the principal.

3. Technology component

Dave Gordon asked the group if the technology guidelines meet our instructional priorities and the requirements and intentions of the GATES proposal. Also, he asked, is it sufficient to ask providers to demonstrate how they will embed technology content rather than prescribe how they will do it in each content section?

In response, Rowland Baker stated that "embed" doesn't mean ignore. He said there are 3 areas in technology that are important to include:

- 1. How to disaggregate data at their school.
- 2. What resources already exist out there so that principals don't reinvent the wheel.
- 3. What the Gates grant requires for service providers.

He stated that we need a rubric to rate proposals so that providers show they can provide training in technology.

Teresa Garcia said that we want to demonstrate or show how to use the CDs given out with assessment data and how to use the data. Technology should be embedded, not separate. The most successful programs will teach the technology content at the same time as the other content. Rowland Baker stated that the technology component will be a challenge for many providers. He asked whether some organization like CTAP could come in and partner to do the tech piece. Teresa Garcia responded that we envisioned partnerships to build a whole, so that one partner could do the standards piece, and another could show principals how to disaggregate the data. Paul Disario stated that technology data varies by district. It is important to consider what districts have in hand. Dave Gordon stated that there may be the most potential for large tiers in this content area. He suggested that the minimum standard should be that principals can use technology that is available in their school.

Richard Navarro pointed out that the discussion doesn't have to be about content versus technology. What is important is how to use technology to support student learning. He stated that each state has a set of standards for administrators, and that all administrators need to develop basic knowledge and skill in the area of technology. He said he favors some prescriptiveness in this area. He mentioned the use of technology for data driven decision-making and the use of funds for technology planning in the school and district to enhance student learning. Rowland Baker stated that we need to put coverage of TechSETS and CLRN back into the criteria. Principals need to know about resources to make life easier. He mentioned TechSETS and the Digital California Project (DCP).

Betsy Eaves stressed that technology training needs to be applications-based, and interactive. If you show people how to do something, they don't learn it. They need to just do it. She stated that providers must present very good adult learning models with a direct connection back at the school site. The training will not be helpful if principals can't figure out how it works at their own site. Frustration will occur if results are expected without the help needed to make it happen. Principals must practice while still in the training.

Joni Samples stated that DCP has large bandwidth, and agreed that providers must do hands-on delivery. She mentioned providing some of the training through DCP. Dave Gordon stated that there are a multitude of technology projects, many of which are not known. Principals need to be shown how they work in their school. There should be a focus on school-level capability. Richard Navarro mentioned thin client capability. He noted that many school districts focus on the school to computer ratio, and that the Digital California Project has made desktop computers obsolete. Rowland Baker stated that there is a lot of money invested in technology but without many tools to enhance instruction. And principals have little knowledge of how to access them.

4. Optional content.

Chair Dave Gordon raised the final question about whether the Appendix was an appropriate place for optional content. He stated that he believed this issue was resolved by previous discussion.

Other issues

Linda Bond suggested that in the section on qualifications of providers, it should be required that providers have current knowledge of the content to be provided. Jay Schenirer suggested that providers should leave a "learning community" framework in place in like-minded districts or schools for principals who want to stay connected with each other.

Angela Addiego stated that regarding the last couple of pages, especially content area 6, she believed they are an essential part of the criteria. She suggested that they be embedded into the guidelines.

Conclusion and Next steps

A date and time for the next meeting was set: Dec. 20th, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dave Gordon invited one more public speaker to address the Advisory Group before adjournment of the meeting.

Speaker: Virginia Dixon, Associate Dean of Education, CSU Sacramento. The speaker spoke about pertinent history of the training of administrators in California. She described her experience training administrators and mentioned a survey of administrators that ranked their training from 3.8 to 4.8 on a 5 point scale of usefulness. Principals cited their ability to deconstruct decisions in administration as very important. She described three important qualities for adult learning: absence of threat, confidentiality, and time.

Dave Gordon adjourned the meeting.